

storing in the memory arrangement product inventory information related to the inventory of the selling entity;

storing in the memory arrangement configuration information related to selling entity products offered for sale by the selling entity;

obtaining information regarding a customer's needs related to the selling entity products; interactively selecting one or more user-selectable product options from a list of user-selectable options to define a configured product which satisfies the customer's needs using the stored configuration information to constrain selection of the product options; and

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identifying from the inventory of the selling entity, using the stored inventory information, one or more available which exactly corresponds to the configured product; when an identified available product that exactly corresponds to the configured product is not found in the stored inventory information, identifying one or more products:

that most closely correspond to the configured product; and

that corresponds to a buildable product;

wherein the interactively selecting one or more user-selectable product options comprises:

identifying the product option interactively selected;

retreiving the configuration rules associated with the selected product option;

applying the configuration rules to the configurable product; and

altering the list of user-selectable options used to interactively configure a product based upon the configuration rules and the inventory available.

8. (Thrice Amended) A computer system implemented method for facilitating a sale of a product from an inventory of a selling entity, the computer system including a memory arrangement and at least one processing unit coupled to the memory arrangement, the method comprising the steps of:

storing in the memory arrangement product inventory information related to the inventory of the selling entity;

storing in the memory arrangement configuration information related to selling entity products offered for sale by the selling entity;

obtaining information regarding a customer's needs related to the selling entity products; and

interactively selecting one or more user-selectable product options from a list of user-selectable options to define a sellable product which satisfies the customer's needs using the stored configuration rules and the stored product inventory information to constrain selection of the product options to product options available in the available inventory of the selling entity;

when a product that includes the one or more user-selected product option does not exactly corresponds to a sellable product found in the stored inventory information, identifying one or more products:

that most closely satisfy the customer's intended use of the product; and

that corresponds to a buildable product;

wherein the interactively selecting one or more user-selectable product options comprises:

identifying the product option interactively selected;

retreiving the configuration rules associated with the selected product option;

applying the configuration rules to the configurable product; and
altering the list of user-selectable options used to interactively configure a product
based upon the configuration rules and the inventory available.

9. (Twice Amended) A computer system implemented method for facilitating a sale of a product from an inventory of a selling entity, the computer system including a memory arrangement and at least one processing unit coupled to the memory arrangement, the method comprising the steps of:

storing in the memory arrangement product inventory information related to the inventory of the selling entity;

storing in the memory arrangement configuration information related to selling entity products offered for sale by the selling entity;

obtaining information regarding a customer's needs related to the selling entity products;
presenting one or more user-selectable product options from a list of user-selectable options to a user of the computer system for selection by the user to define a configured product which satisfies the customer's needs using the stored configuration information to constrain selection of the product options; and

providing an indication to the user of the computer system, based on the stored inventory information, of whether selection of a particular presented product option, if incorporated into the configured product, would preclude obtaining the product from the available inventory of the selling entity;

when a product that exactly corresponds to the configured product is not found in the stored inventory information, identifying one or more products:

that most closely satisfy the customer's intended use of the product; and
that corresponds to a buildable product;
wherein the presenting one or more user-selectable product options comprises:
identifying the product option interactively selected;
retrieving the configuration rules associated with the selected product option;
applying the configuration rules to the configurable product; and
altering the list of user-selectable options used to interactively configure a product
based upon the configuration rules and the inventory available.

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10. (Thrice Amended) A computer system implemented method for facilitating a sale of a product from an inventory of a selling entity, the computer system including a memory arrangement and at least one processing unit coupled to the memory arrangement, the method comprising the steps of:

storing in the memory arrangement product inventory information related to the inventory of the selling entity;

storing in the memory arrangement configuration information related to selling entity products offered for sale by the selling entity;

obtaining information regarding a customer's intended uses of a product to be purchased;

assigning a corresponding value to each of the customer's uses depending on an importance of the use to the customer, and

identifying, using the stored inventory information and the obtained information regarding the customer's intended uses and corresponding value, one or more products which are

in the available inventory of the selling entity and which exactly satisfy the customer's intended use of the product;

when a product that exactly corresponds to that exactly satisfies the customer's intended use of the product is not found in the stored inventory information, identifying one or more products:

that most closely satisfy the customer's intended use of the product; and

that corresponds to a buildable product;

wherein the obtaining information regarding a customer's intended uses of a product comprises:

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presenting one or more user-selectable product options from a list of user-selectable options to a user of the computer system for selection by the user to define a configured product which satisfies the customer's needs using the stored configuration information to constrain selection of the product options;

identifying the product option interactively selected;

retrieving the configuration rules associated with the selected product option;

applying the configuration rules to the configurable product; and

altering the list of user-selectable options used to interactively configure a product based upon the configuration rules and the inventory available.

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is requested in view of the following remarks. Claims 1-10 are now pending in the present application as a result of the instant